KILLER INSTINCT

CHAPTER THREE

WILDC.A.T.S™

COVERT

DC

7
JAN

J.M.LEE
B/WILLIAMS

WILDC.A.T.S™
COVERT ACTION TEAMS #7

KILLER INSTINCT CHAPTER THREE:

"SHOWDOWN"

JIM LEE/BRANDON CHOI: CO-CREATORS

BRANDON CHOI/JIM LEE: STORY

JIM LEE: PENCILS

SCOTT WILLIAMS: INKS

JOE CHIODO: COLORS

BEN FERNANDEZ/JOE DUNN: COLOR SEPARATORS

CHRIS ELIOPOULUS: LETTERS

DEBORAH MARVIN: EDITOR

INK ASSISTS
JD, JOHN TIGHE, RICH JOHNSON

COLOR ASSISTS
PAIGE APFELBAUM, WENDY FOUTS & MONICA BENNETT

PRODUCTION
DENNIS HEISLER, CHRIS MILOS & JESSICA RUFFNER

SOMEWHERE IN THE SKIES ABOVE GAMORRA, OFF THE COAST OF THE PHILIPPINES...

STRYKER, THIS IS CYBLADE. MISERY SAYS WE'RE NEARING THE DROP ZONE.

ROGER THAT, CYBLADE.

ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE, YOU KNOW THE SITUATION. IF HALF OF WHAT MISERY SAID IS TRUE ABOUT THESE NEW CYBERDATA S.H.O.C.S, WE'RE IN FOR A NASTY FIGHT.

SINCE THEY'VE MANAGED TO TAKE OUT OUR EYE IN THE SKY, WE'LL BE GOING IN BLIND, SO I WANT US TO HIT THE GROUND RUNNING ON THIS ONE.

TRACTOR FIELD'S ACTIVATED, STRYKER. IT'S SHOW TIME!

THEN I GUESS THAT'S IT FOR THE PEP TALK.

LET'S DO IT!

HIS NAME IS MORGAN STRYKER.

BORN A MUTANT WITH FOUR ARMS, HE LEARNED EARLY ON IN HIS YOUTH TO ACCEPT LIFE'S CHALLENGES--AND OVERCOME THEM.

TO THIS END, HE DEVELOPED AND NURTURED HIS RATHER UNUSUAL TRAIT TO BECOME ONE OF AMERICA'S ELITE SOLDIERS...THE BEST OF THE BEST.

THIS BROUGHT HIM TO THE ATTENTION OF CYBERDATA, WHO TRANSFORMED THE MAN INTO A CYBERNETIC WEAPON OF DESTRUCTION, A S.H.O.C.

BUT WITH THE AID OF A FEW FRIENDS, HE ESCAPED CYBERDATA'S CLUTCHES TO BECOME A FOUNDING MEMBER OF...

...CYBER FORCE!

SO WHAT'RE THESE GUYS AFTER, STRYKER?

IMPACT

RIPCLAW

MISERY TOLD ME SOME GAMORRAN SCIENTISTS CREATED A NEW BIO-SYNTHETIC TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE FIELD OF ARTIFICIAL LIFE FORMS.

CYBERDATA WANTS IT TO CREATE DEADLIER AND MORE POWERFUL S.H.O.C.S. OUR JOB IS TO MAKE SURE THEY DON'T GET IT!

YEAH! IT'S TIME TO SHOW CYBERDATA THAT WE'RE STILL ON THE JOB!

HEATWAVE

VELOCITY

BACK IN THE COCKPIT...

SO WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON THE ISLE OF THE DEAD, MISERY?

IT WAS THE SITE OF RICHTOFFEN'S FIRST LAB. WARBLADE, RIPCLAW, KILLJOY AND I RAIDED IT FOR CYBERDATA WHEN WE WERE STILL WITH THE S.H.O.C.S, A COUPLE YEARS BACK.

WHEN I DISCOVERED WARBLADE WAS PLANNING TO SELL US OUT, HE TRIED TO KILL ME. DIDN'T SUCCEED, BUT I USED THE CONFUSION TO ESCAPE CYBERDATA'S LEASH. I'VE BEEN ON MY OWN SINCE THEN.

ANYWAY, I NEEDED THE SAT-COM* SYSTEM THERE TO CONTACT RIPCLAW WHEN WARBLADE AND HIS NEW TEAM OF S.H.O.C.S ATTACKED THE MAINLAND RESEARCH FACILITY HERE LAST NIGHT.

I BARELY ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE WHEN THEY DESTROYED THE PLACE TRYING TO GET IN...

"...BUT NOW I'M AFRAID THEY MAY BE BACK THERE TRYING TO SALVAGE WHAT THEY CAN.

"I JUST PRAY WE'RE NOT TOO LATE TO STOP THEM."

*SATELLITE COMMUNICATION.

LOOKS LIKE NOBODY'S HOME, STRYKE. TOO BAD WE MISSED THE PARTY.

STAY FROSTY, IMPACT.

IF THESE GUYS WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF BLACKING OUT OUR SATELLITE MONITOR, THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING.

IMPACT MAY BE RIGHT. IT'S ALL CLEAR FROM UP HERE.

NO! I HAVE THEIR SCENT, HEATWAVE! THEIR TRACKS SAY THEY'RE NEARBY... SOMEWHERE.

BACK AT THE ISLE OF THE DEAD...

WHY'D YOU CHOOSE THIS PLACE FOR THE MEETING, SUN-YAT? IT'S SO... CREEPY!

THINK, KYRA! IT'S A CEMETERY... NO ONE'S GOING TO COME OUT HERE! IT'S THE PERFECT SPOT FOR THE EXCHANGE.

YOU READY, TOSHI?

VROOOOSH

ARMED AND DANGEROUS, SUN-YAT.

EXPECTING TROUBLE?

NO, BUT IT ALWAYS HELPS TO BE PREPARED FOR ANY SURPRISES.

ESPECIALLY WITH THIS NEW SHIPMENT OF XENOX. IT'S THE HOTTEST DESIGNER DRUG OUTSIDE OF GAMORRA. WITH OUR OWN PRIVATE STOCK, WE'RE GOING TO MAKE A KILLING.

KRAAASH!

WHAT THE HELL?!

EEEEK! WHAT IS THAT?!

$#%@! WASTE HIM, TOSHI!

BRAAP!

SHLACKT!

KLINK! KLANK!

HE...HE DESTROYED THE GUN!

I...NEED... YOUR...SHIP...!

GET OUT!

YIEEE!

VROOOOOSH

MEANWHILE...

WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE SUB-BASEMENT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THAT'S WHERE THE *BISEY* DATA IS STORED.

I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE IT IS.

WE SHOULD DO A CAREFUL SEARCH OF THE AREA FIRST.

THERE'S NO TIME! FOLLOW ME!

MISERY... STRYKER HAS A POINT...

...BUT...BUT... YOU'RE RIGHT, MISERY.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MAJOR? MISERY SAID...

I HEARD THE LADY, VELOCITY. GO ON, KID, I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

NOTHING'S SHOWING UP ON ANY OF MY SENSORS, BUT MY INSTINCTS TELL ME THERE'S SOMETHING OUT HERE...

I'M IMPRESSED.

MY DERMAL REFRACTORS AND THERMAL DAMPENERS ARE SUPPOSED TO COMPLETELY CLOAK ME, BUT YOUR INSTINCTS SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN THE BETTER OF MY TECHNOLOGY.

SHRAKOW!

LET'S SEE HOW THE REST OF YOU COMPARES!

AAARRGH!

MY SENSORS INDICATE MISERY'S PSI SIGNATURE IS IMPRINTED ON YOUR BRAINWAVES SO I'LL TRY AND FINISH THIS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

IT MAY BE A LITTLE PAINFUL, BUT YOU'LL STILL BE ALIVE.

WHACK!

HANG IN THERE, MAJOR! I'LL--

HUUNGH!

VZZZP VZZZP VZZZP

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO DO THAT, YOUNG LADY.

WHA?!

THE FILAMENTS... WRAPPING THEM-SELVES AROUND ME...AS THOUGH THEY'RE ALIVE!

I'M LOSING CONTROL--

DON'T WORRY--I'VE CALCULATED YOUR SPEED, TRAJECTORY, AND POINT OF IMPACT. THIS SHOULDN'T HURT...

...MUCH!

RWWSSSHHHH

THOOMP!

FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT. THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON HERE AND I INTEND TO--

THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR ME TO TRY AND EXPLAIN THINGS TO YOU, MAJOR.

YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST--

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

NOT AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

THIS IS NO GAME, STRANGER-- IT'S FOR KEEPS.

YEAARGH!

HANG IN THERE, STRYKER! I'M ON MY WAY.

RRUUUMBLE

I DON'T THINK SO. YOU GOT PROBLEMS OF YOUR OWN.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT--I WAS ALWAYS A GREAT PROBLEM SOLVER!

UUUNGH!

WHACK!

HAH! IS THAT YOUR BEST SHOT?

NO...

THOOOMP!

...THIS IS!

IT'LL TAKE A BIGGER MAN THAN YOU TO BEAT ME!

I CAN ARRANGE THAT.

OH, MAN, ME AND MY BIG MOUTH!

KA-

THOOOM!

WHY DON'T WE SEE IF MY *FOOT* FITS IN IT!

HALF A WORLD AWAY AT HALO, INC. IN NEW YORK...

STANSFIELD, ANY FURTHER WORD FROM SPARTAN?

I'M AFRAID NOT, MR. MARLOWE, BUT MR. TATUM FROM THE GULF STREAM DOCKYARDS INSISTS UPON SPEAKING WITH YOU ABOUT THE MAIDEN VOYAGE OF THE CARIBBEAN PRINCESS.

TELL HIM I'LL CALL HIM BACK.

VERY GOOD, SIR: THERE IS ALSO A MR. GARING CALLING ABOUT--

HOLD ALL MY CALLS, STANSFIELD. JUST TELL THEM... ALL...I'LL GET BACK TO THEM AS SOON AS I CAN.

AS THE FOUNDER OF THE WILDC.A.T.S, JACOB MARLOWE WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO BE FIGHTING AT THEIR SIDES.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS BUSINESS EMPIRE FORCE HIM TO REMAIN BEHIND TO MAKE SURE THE WILDC.A.T.S HAVE A FINANCIAL AS WELL AS LOGISTICAL INFRA-STRUCTURE WITH WHICH TO WAGE THEIR WAR AGAINST THE DAEMONITES.

BUT ALL OF IT WILL MEAN NOTHING IF THE WILDC.A.T.S ARE LOST, AND THAT IS THE THOUGHT THAT TERRIFIES HIM MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

EXCUSE ME, MR. MARLOWE, BUT IT'S TIME FOR YOUR MEETING WITH MR. STEINMAN--

CANCEL IT, JULES.

I'M AFRAID HE'S ALREADY WAITING FOR YOU IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, SIR.

NO...I WAS THE ONE WHO CALLED FOR THE MEETING-- I'LL GO. HOW ARE ADRIANNA AND PRIS DOING?

THE DOCTORS SAY THEY'LL BOTH BE FINE.

"VOODOO IS RESTING IN THE MED-LAB, AND VOID IS ALREADY UP AND ABOUT."

GOOD EVENING, PRISCILLA. I THOUGHT I WOULD BRING YOU SOME DIN--EH?

FSSH

I'M OVER HERE, ADRIANNA.

I DON'T CARE WHAT THE DOCTORS SAID--I JUST COULDN'T STAY IN THAT BED ANYMORE.

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

IT'S JUST... I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE OTHERS.

SPARTAN'S A GOOD LEADER. I'M SURE THEY'LL BE FINE. I'LL BE GOING BACK FOR THEM SOON.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE ON YOUR MIND, ISN'T THERE?

OUR JOB-- I NEVER REALIZED HOW DANGEROUS IT COULD BE...

I JUST...I... I DON'T WANT TO... DIE.

UNTIL YOU WERE HURT. THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE, PRISCILLA, IT'S ALL RIGHT TO BE AFRAID.

NONE OF US DO, CHILD, AND THAT'S WHY WE WORK AS A TEAM, SO THAT WE CAN PROTECT ONE ANOTHER.

THANKS, ADRIANNA... FOR LISTENING.

SOMEWHERE HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH, ON BOARD THE U.N. ORBITAL SPACE STATION, SKYWATCH...

INTERESTING, OUR SURVEILLANCE OF THE ***STORMWATCH ONE*** SITUATION INDICATES THAT BATTALION AND HIS TEAM AREN'T THE ONLY ***SPBS**** OPERATING IN GAMORRA TODAY.

THAT FOUR-ARMED COMBATANT APPEARS TO BE ***MORGAN STRYKER***-- ACCOMPANIED BY ***CYBER-FORCE*** ON THIS MISSION, IT WOULD SEEM.

THE COVERT ACTION TEAM THEY'RE ***BATTLING*** IS A MYSTERY, HOWEVER.

* SPB: SUPER POWERED BEING.

I DO ***NOT*** LIKE MYSTERIES.

AGENT BOOTH--COMPILE ALL DATA PERTAINING TO THE UNIDENTIFIED SPBS AND HAVE THE COMPUTER DESIGN AUTO- OPS* FOR THE ***C.T.C.****

YES, SIR.

* AUTO-OP: AUTO-MATED OPPONENT, C.T.C.: COMBAT TRAINING CENTER

I INTEND TO BE ***PREPARED*** SHOULD STORMWATCH ENCOUNTER THESE WILDC.A.T.S IN THE FUTURE.

HEY, WEATHERMAN-- I'VE GOT THE ANSWER TO ***ALL*** YOUR TROUBLES!

INDEED? PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO *ENLIGHTEN* THE REST OF US, CANNON .

YEAH, *THIS* SHOULD BE GOOD.

LOOK, BATTALION AND STORMWATCH ONE ARE HAVIN' PROBLEMS WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN GAMORRA, RIGHT?

WELL, WHAT I WANT TO DO IS LEAD MY TEAM DOWN THERE TO TAKE OUT CYBER-FORCE AND THAT WILDC.A.T. THAT TRASHED THE GAMORRANS' RESEARCH INSTALLATION.

WE HAND *THEM* OVER TO THE GAMORRANS ALONG WITH THIS *VIDEO FOOTAGE.* CLAIM THE *ENTIRE INCIDENT* WITH BATTALION WAS A *TERRIBLE* MISUNDERSTANDING, AND AS A TOKEN OF *GOOD FAITH,* THEY RELEASE OUR PEOPLE.

AND I--I MEAN *WE*-- SAVE THE DAY, AND *STORMWATCH* COMES OUT SMELLING LIKE *ROSES.*

SO, YOU *AGREE* WITH ME ON THIS ONE, WEATHERMAN?

NO, CANNON. NOT *NOW*...

...AND MOST LIKELY, NOT *EVER.*

IT LOOKS LIKE MAUL'S GOT THEIR BIG GUY PRETTY MUCH UNDER CONTROL.

IT'S TOO BAD WE HAVE TO FIGHT THESE GUYS AT ALL, THE WORD HAD IT THAT CYBER-FORCE WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS. WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN MISERY'S MESSIN' WITH THEIR HEADS.

THE PROBLEM IS STOPPING MISERY WITH-OUT HURTING THE REST OF THEM...

...AND NOT GETTING OURSELVES KILLED IN THE PROCESS.

EH?!

HEY, MISTER! WHY JUST WATCH--

--WHEN YOU CAN LIVE THE ADVEN-TURE!

BZZAKATAK!

YEAARRGH!

GOTTA... TRY AND... ROLL...WITH... THE...

KER-RACK!

GOOD LORD! HE'S BROKEN HIS NECK! WHA... WHAT'VE I DONE?

GOTTEN A WHOLE LOT CLOSER TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR ME, MY MAN!

CRAACK!

YOU'RE ALIVE?! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

SO MY CHIROPRACTOR KEEPS TELLING ME! HURTS LIKE A @#$%*, BUT NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT YOU'RE GONNA FEEL!

I MAKE SURE THE SETTING'S ON STUN AND THEN I LET HIM HAVE IT!

AAARRGH!

PHAM!

PHAM!

PHAM!

PHAM!

WONDER WHERE ZEALOT'S HIDING HERSELF...

MISERY AND THE ONE CALLED RIPCLAW ARE AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE SUB-BASEMENT. SHE MUST BE AFTER THE STASIS POD.

IF WE ARE EVER TO GET WARBLADE BACK, I MUST STOP HER!

BUT TO DO THAT, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH ME FIRST, S.H.O.C. SCUM.

BY HECATE! I WAS TOO FOCUSED ON MISERY!

JUST ONE THRUST OF MY PSI-BLADE AND IT'LL BE OVER!

HUH?

THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN, WOMAN!

CAN'T...REACH... TOO...STRONG...

HUURGH!

WHUCK!

TOO STRONG AND FAST FOR YOU!

WHILE YOUR ABILITIES ARE FORMIDABLE, THEY ARE NO MATCH FOR A CODA...

THWACK!

...MUCH LESS ONE WITH A MILLENNIUM OF COMBAT EXPERIENCE!

PERHAPS HAD MISERY NOT CLOUDED YOUR MIND, THE RESULTS WOULD BE DIFFERENT--BUT FOR NOW YOU ARE BEATEN, SISTER.

CONCEDE AND OUR LEADER, SPARTAN, MAY BE ABLE TO CLEAR HER IMPRINT FROM YOUR MIND.

DO NOT MAKE THIS MORE PAINFUL THAN NEED BE. WE ARE *NOT* YOUR ENEMY.

CAN'T... BE...TRUE! SHE SAID...YOU WERE...S.H.O.C.S. HAVE TO...STOP YOU!

NOT TODAY, SISTER. FOR YOU, THIS FIGHT IS FINISHED.

WHOK!

ALONG WITH YOUR LIFE, VILLAIN!

PRAY TO YOUR GODS CYBLADE IS ALIVE, OR YOU SHALL SUFFER A MOST PAIN-FUL DEATH!

SHRAK!

AAARGH!

LISTEN TO ME, RIPCLAW--I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU, BUT MISERY HAS TAKEN A COMRADE CAPTIVE AND I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO GET HIM BACK!

AARGH!

SHUNK!

STOP HER, RIPCLAW! SHE'S A FRIEND OF WARBLADE AND WANTS TO KILL US!

YEAARGH!

SHRAKK!

YOUR WORDS AND WEAPONS MEAN NOTHING TO ME, WOMAN! IF YOU WISH TO BE WITH WARBLADE, I WILL HELP YOU JOIN HIM IN DEATH!

HER...CONTROL... OVER HIM...IS... COMPLETE. MUST... STOP...MISERY... OR...ALL...WILL... DIE!

HURRY, ROBERT! WE'RE NEARLY THERE.

EVEN AS HE FOLLOWS MISERY, THE SPIRIT WITHIN RIPCLAW FIGHTS TO BREAK FREE OF HER CONTROL.

LYDIA, SHOULDN'T WE CHECK ON HOW THE OTHERS ARE DOING?

THEY'LL BE FINE, ROBERT. OUR JOB IS TO GET TO THE STASIS POD BEFORE THOSE S.H.O.C.S.

HMM...THEY'VE MANAGED TO ACCESS THE VAULT AND EXTRACT THE STASIS POD, BUT THE SEAL ON THE POD IS INTACT.

WE'VE WON!

I'LL JUST DISARM THE SECURITY SYSTEM TO GET THE DATA, AND THEN WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY.

TIK TIK TIK

TAK TAK

CLICK

AHHH! HERE IT IS, MY LOVE. JUST AS YOU SAID IT WOULD BE.

SOON I'LL BEGIN THE REGENERATION PROCESS, AND WE'LL BE TO-GETHER AGAIN... FOREVER.

BUT I'M ALREADY HERE, LYDIA.

OH, YES... OF COURSE YOU ARE.

TELL ME WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT POD!

DON'T YOU SEE? IT HOLDS THE KEY TO THE FUTURE, ROBERT.

THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF A GREAT MAN TO MAKE A NEW WORLD. A WORLD OF PERFECT BEINGS WHO WILL NEVER KNOW DEATH OR DECAY...

...AND THE FIRST OF THESE NEW BEINGS SHALL BE THE VERY ARCHITECT OF THIS UTOPIA, DR. ERICH RICHTOFFEN.

THAT NOISE?!

SOMEONE BEHIND US!

NICE STORY, MISERY--

SKRAAASH!

--BUT I DON'T BUY A WORD OF IT!

YOU AND RICHTOFFEN WERE PLANNING TO SELL THOSE BISEY* UNITS TO THE DAEMONITES, AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET THAT HAPPEN!

REMEMBER HOW YOU WERE ALWAYS THE HEARTBREAKER IN THE OLD DAYS, MISERY?

WELL, IT'S MY TURN NOW, AND MY TECHNIQUE'S A LITTLE MORE *HANDS-ON* THAN YOURS!

I'M GONNA RIP YOUR HEART OUT!

* BIO SYNTHETIC ENTITY

NEXT: THE THRILLING CONCLUSION TO THE KILLER INSTINCT CROSSOVER IN CYBERFORCE #3!

ZONE